

Report on the work of the Test Valley Community Safety Group

Report of the Community Engagement Manager (Community Safety); on behalf of the Test Valley Partnership.

Recommended:

- 1. That the report be acknowledged and partnership approach be endorsed.**
- 2. That Officers bring a report back to Overview and Scrutiny in autumn 2024 to give an annual update on the work of the Community Safety Management Group.**

SUMMARY:

- A report on the work of the Test Valley Community Safety Group over the past twelve months and the priorities for the year ahead.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report follows previous reports the last of which was in November 2022, in regard to specific elements of work undertaken by the Community Safety Management Group (CSMG).
- 1.2 This report summarises the priorities of the CSMG and gives examples of some of the projects and operations it has initiated and operated, its successes and challenges over the past twelve months.

2 Background

- 2.1 The CSMG is a sub-group of the Test Valley Partnership and comprises of the statutory Community Safety Partners (TVBC; Police; Fire & Rescue Service; NHS Integrated Care Board; Probation), plus other relevant local Community Safety Partners such as Registered Social Landlords, Neighbourhood Watch, Town Centre and BID managers, amongst others.
- 2.2 It enables organisations working locally in this sector to respond to the needs of communities in a co-ordinated and organised way by sharing skills, resources and data. The group addresses community safety specific issues on a tactical and localised level. This allows for responsible authorities and other local agencies and partners to work in partnership to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour priorities locally. The group considers and plans responses to key issues arising, hotspots, and the planning and implementation of measures for an action plan to address the identified priorities.
- 2.3 Officers from TVBC also attend monthly confidential Police's Tactical Command Briefing Meetings to help ensure that effective two-way communication and co-ordination is maintained on key issues between the CSMG and Police. CSMG priorities are a standing item on this agenda.

3 Partnership Objectives and Priorities

3.1 In October 2023, the Test Valley Partnership assessed and decided their community safety priorities for 2023/4. These now include new duties on the partnership such as the Serious Violence Duty, and national priority in regards to Violence against Women and Girls:

- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) – providing support/advice for victims to improve the ease of reporting; develop prevention via educational messaging on positive behaviours / relationships.
- Serious Violence - Sharing info and intelligence, in particular on raising awareness of how organisations can do this.
- Anti-Social Behaviours - Focusing on engagement, on the positive narrative to address public perceptions, developing/enabling positive activities for young people.
- Fire - Education and risk, data sharing; Awareness of support and resources available (i.e. Safe & Well Visits)
- Fraud – Awareness and barriers to reporting.
- Drugs – to co-operate to reduce the impact of drug related harm.

3.2 In addition, monthly sub-group casework meetings (Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) are also held in the North & South of the district with all relevant partners to discuss and plan for cases on an individual basis.

3.3 A further series of monthly partnership meetings of relevant members continues to take place under the auspices of 'Operation Fortress', focusing on intelligence sharing and co-ordination of issues surrounding drugs and their related harms.

4 Context

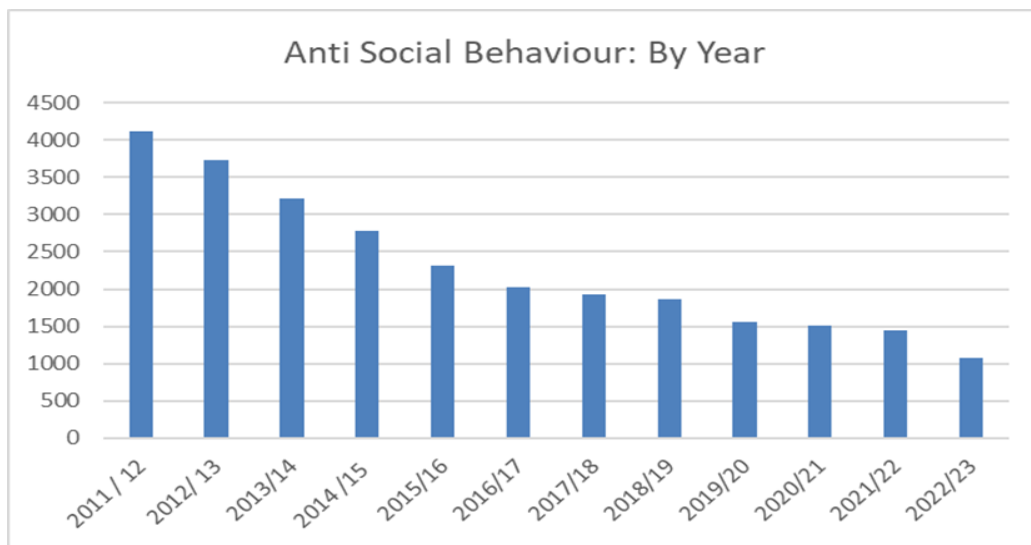
4.1 The diverse nature of the Community Safety Management Group, incorporating statutory, voluntary and third sector organisations linked to community safety allows for a wide range of information, skills, capacity and intelligence to be brought to the group and incorporated into discussions and projects. It also allows for important messages around crime prevention and public safety to be disseminated to these groups and their wider community networks.

4.2 In 2022/23, Total Crime in Test Valley increased by 420 reports (5%) to 8,793. Crime reporting levels increased in each quarter of the first half of the year, before falling in the latter half. The highest levels of reports took place in July and October. January and February showed the lowest rates. Hampshire overall noted an 8.2% increase in 2022, in line with Police recorded crime nationally. A full breakdown of the figures is shown in Appendix A.

4.3 Data in regards to Serious Violence levels in Test Valley show that for the period 1st March 2022 – 31st May 2023, incidents numbers were unchanged for the same period the previously. Test Valley District shows the 6th lowest levels of reports of Serious Violent crime in 202 in the county. This equates to a proportion of 1.5 people per 1,000 residents, considerably lower than the Force average of 2.4/1,000.

5 Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.1 Analysis of the available data shows that reports of incidents of ASB made to Police have continued to fall by a further 374 incidents (25.7%) to 1,079 in 22/23. The number of reports continued to fall year-on-year in each quarter.
- 5.2 From its peak in 2011 at 1,234 in Quarter 2 of that year, reports have fallen to 224 in Quarter 4 of 2022/23.
- 5.3 Countywide, Test Valley District recorded the (third) lowest levels of ASB over the year improving from 6th the previous year, without adjustment for population levels.



- 5.5 Online reports of incidents of Anti-Social Behaviours to Test Valley Borough Council's Community Team rose by 27 to 151 in the year from 1st May 2022 – 31st May 2023. Of these 85 were received from Northern Test Valley, with 56 from Southern Test Valley.

6 Partnership Projects

- 6.1 The CSMG co-ordinates a range of operations and projects to help address the priorities and key issues identified. The full details of the partnership operations and projects undertaken and monitored via the CSMG during 2023/23 are outlined in Appendix A.
- 6.2 Further projects have been undertaken and supported since this time and over the summer of 2023 have included a range of inclusive summer youth diversionary activities across Andover and the South of the Test Valley. These include a range of activities such as sports and skate events to engage young people at risk of committing Anti-social behaviours or crime, and to help break down barriers between these and the agencies supporting and enforcing them.
- 6.3 In addition, a series of 'Half-Term Hangouts' took place in the southern Test Valley, and a targeted Youth Partnership Day was held in Romsey with a range of partners and which included the 'Drugs Bus' which had been successful in previous years in helping educate and divert young people from negative behaviours.

- 6.4 The annual Big Band Buffet was held in Stockbridge in November 2023, with a full capacity of older and vulnerable people attending. 14 partner agencies supported the event providing advice and support to stay safe and well in the community, and to advise of the relevant support services available to them. Overall, 100% of those attending thought the event was 'good' or 'excellent'. This was the ninth time the event had been held since 2014.
- 6.5 In October 2023, Test Valley CSP, in collaboration with Southampton, Winchester and New Forrest CSPs, bid for and were awarded a total of £299,998 from round 5 of the Homes Offices' 'Safer Street Fund'. This funding will jointly contribute towards the TVP properties over 2023/4 and 2024/5 in the following priority areas –
- Work with partners to expand Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory (IDVA) services in the southern areas of the district.
 - To deliver 'VAWG' based Behavioural change work and establish a local Women's Safety Charter across these areas.
 - A provide a joint Burglary and property marking initiative using Select DNA, as promoted by the Home Office, to be distributed to repeat victims and others at highest risk, and those who may be fearful or vulnerable. Evaluation shows that this can help to have a significant impact to reduce burglary.
 - Additional CCTV units to cover the Crossfield Hall car park to help address reports of theft of and from motor vehicles in the area.

7 Other Aspects

- 7.1 In July 2023 a new Domestic Homicide Referral (DHR) was received to the Test Valley Community Safety Partnership. An independent Chair has been appointed to oversee the process and draft the learning and recommendation report. At the time of writing, a scoping exercise of partners involvement has been completed and the DHR panel is due to meet to progress the process from December. A parallel 'Safeguarding Adult Review' is being held by the Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board, and plans to incorporate the separate reviews are being investigated.
- 7.2 To date the Partnership are still awaiting permission from the Home Office to publish the previous DHR report in respect of 'Nicole'.
- 7.3 The Partnership also have a new duty to undertake 'Offensive Weapon Homicide Reviews', however no such referrals have yet been received locally.
- 7.4 The Partnership also continues to work closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the 'Violence Reduction Unit' on the new duties around Serious Violence and VAWG; along with their countywide ASB Taskforce; Strategic and Tactical Violence Reduction Partnerships; Intervention, Evaluation and Opportunity Working Group on knife crime, (including in supporting the proactive 'Operation Sceptre' weeks of action); and Restorative Justice programmes, in particular.

8 Equality Issues

8.1 None

9 Other Issues

9.1 Environmental Health Issues - none

9.2 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate - none

9.3 Property Issues - none

9.4 Wards/Communities Affected – none

10 Conclusion

10.1 Overall, levels of crime and ASB remain generally low in Test Valley but with areas of fluctuation. The CSMG continues to work constructively in partnership to meet the identified priorities, and the allocation of funds from the SSF5 funding will help to support this, particularly across the new duty areas.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1	File Ref:	N/A
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Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	22 November 2023